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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Friday, June 3, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "TIPS FOR COOKING LAMB." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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It's June again! I'm making that comment -- not because I think it's news to you -- but because it brings to my mind so many things that are pleasant -- such as last days of school -- rows of young men and women in caps and gowns -- daisy chains and dress parades -- beautiful roses -- and brides in filmy white.

However, I'll leave any further comments on the beauties of June to the poets. For I know that as a meal-planner you'll be more interested in my news and suggestions for cooking lamb.

Of course, since it's June, my news is about spring lambs. That's practically the only kind of lambs there are on the market now. Spring lambs are young -- slaughtered when they are from three to five months old. At that age they've been almost entire milk-fed.

This year we've had a good season for these early spring lambs -- one of the best ever according to the men who keep tab on the nation's meat supply. As you'd naturally expect, the quality of lambs has been unusually good so far. And if you've watched the lamb situation through the butcher's showcase you've seen that prices have been lower than they were last year.

So much for shopping news on spring lamb. Now, the cooking. And here the story is mainly one of broiling and roasting. Since all lamb is slaughtered young, all cuts may be classed as "tender" -- and cooked accordingly. Of course there are many small or odd-shaped pieces of lean lamb that you'll want to make use of in lamb stews--- in patties -- for braising -- or other similar dishes.

In cooking lamb, the cardinal principle is the same as in all meat cookery -- that is, "cook at a moderate temperature at least most of the time". If you cook any meat at high temperatures it'll lose juice -- shrink -- and become dry. And you won't get the same good flavor that you do when you cook it at a moderate temperature.

For roasting tender cuts there are two important rules. The first --"use no lid on the pan". The second -- "add no water". Both of these -- covered roasters and added water -- go to make steam. When you cook with steam you lose meat juice and sacrifice some flavor. And of course, since the lamb is already tender there is really no point to cooking it with steam.

Here are three other roasting pointers. Put a rack under the meat that'll keep the roast from sticking to the pan bottom. If one side of the roast happens to be fatter than the other -- put that side up. Then when the fat melts -- it automatically bastes the roast. If you have a roast that is fairly lean, lay a few pieces of bacon or salt pork over it.

When you broil lamb -- use the same method as for broiling any meat. Sear the chops quickly -- then reduce the heat and finish cooking at a moderate temperature. If you're pan-broiling the lamb remember to have the pan sizzling hot before you put the chops into it. And pour off the excess fat from time to time so the chops will really broil -- not fry.

Shopping for lamb is fairly simple. You don't have the problem of selecting a tender or a less tender cut. And lamb is a most convenient size for serving. A lamb chop is a good individual helping. And you can usually find a leg, a shoulder, or a breast that will make a family-sized roast.

If your family likes lamb it's usually good economy to buy a roast that has more than enough meat for one meal. You'll find many uses for left-over lamb. It's one of the best meats to serve cold. And it's good in hot dishes such as curried lamb -- in croquettes -- or for stuffed peppers.

Leg of lamb is the roast that's most in demand. But shoulder roast is less expensive. And shoulder that's been boned has a convenient pocket for stuffing and is an easy roast to carve. Lamb breast makes a smaller roast -- usually it'll serve 2 or 3 persons. Crown roast and saddle of lamb are two more expensive roasts that you may want to buy for special occasions.

And here are two general -- and final -- hints on lamb -- about the fat and the fell. The fat on lamb hardens at higher temperatures than the fat on other meats. So be sure to serve lamb either piping hot or cold -- no lukewarm in-between.

And as for the fell -- the thin papery covering on the outside of lamb -- whether you leave that on or take it off is just a matter of convenience and appearance. As far as recent tests have shown the fell does not affect the flavor. So cooks take it off chops because chops cook better and look better that way. But they leave it on leg of lamb because it helps to reduce shrinkage and cooking time -- helps to keep the leg in shape.

And that's all the lamb talk I have time for today. Now just a 1-2-3-summary of what I've said. Spring lambs are plentiful on the market now. Roasting and broiling are the "right" methods of cooking most of this tender young animal. Serve lamb either hot or cold. And remove the fell from lamb whenever you can do it conveniently and when it improves the appearance of the cut.

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